In the Claims:

Please amend Claims 1 and 11; cancel Claim 19; and add new Claim 23, all as shown below. Applicant respectfully reserves the right to prosecute any originally presented or canceled claims in a continuing or future application.

1. (Currently Amended) A message routing mechanism for a collaboration system that supports conversations between participants over multiple business protocols, comprising:

a central collaboration hub hosting a plurality of collaboration spaces and capable of receiving and sending messages between participants as part of a conversation between the participants;

a plurality of business protocol handlers, each of which are configured to use a different business protocol, and which may be used by a participant to participate in the conversation,

wherein a conversation is a collective set of said messages, and wherein each of said collaboration spaces stores the set of messages for a particular conversation, and may be accessed by the participants using any of a plurality of business protocols, and wherein each combination of collaboration space and business protocol is associated with a unique uniform resource locator ~~that allows a participant using a particular business protocol to access a collaboration space using the uniform resource locator associated with that combination~~; and

a messaging protocol that allows each participant ~~the collaboration hub to determine the status of a conversation and its participants, wherein said messaging protocol provides an ability~~ to specify a routing information and ~~the~~ business protocol used by that participant for a given conversation, wherein the business protocol is specified by the uniform resource locator used by the participant to communicate with the collaboration space.

2. (Original) The message routing mechanism of claim 1 wherein the routing criteria for a message are specified by the message protocol.

3. (Original) The message routing mechanism of claim 2 wherein the routing criteria is specified in the message overhead.

4. (Original) The message routing mechanism of claim 3 wherein the collaboration hub includes a repository of participant and conversation information which can be matched against a message overhead to determine the routing for a message.

5. (Original) The message routing mechanism of claim 4 further comprising a message router for routing a message depending on the content of the message overhead and the content of the repository.

6. (Original) The message routing mechanism of claim 4 further comprising a message filter for filtering a message depending on the content of the message overhead and the content of the repository.

7. (Original) The message routing mechanism of claim 1 further comprising a messaging bridge for transferring messages from a first collaboration space to a second collaboration space.

8. (Original) The message routing mechanism of claim 1 further comprising a messaging gateway for transferring messages from a collaboration space to a business messaging system.

9. (Original) The message routing mechanism of claim 8 wherein the business messaging system is any of an XML, CSML, Ariba NET or equivalent messaging system.

10. (Original) The message routing mechanism of claim 1 further comprising a messaging proxy for transferring messages to a messaging device.

11. (Currently Amended) A method for routing messages between participants in a collaboration system involving multiple business protocols , comprising the steps of:

providing a plurality of business protocol handlers, each of which are configured to use a different business protocol, and which may be used by a participant to participate in a conversation,

hosting a plurality of collaboration spaces at a central collaboration hub, capable of receiving and sending messages between participants, as part of a conversation between the participants,

wherein a conversation is a collective set of said messages, and

wherein each of said collaboration spaces stores the set of messages for a particular conversation, and may be accessed by the participants using any of a plurality of business protocols, and

wherein each combination of collaboration space and business protocol is associated with a unique uniform resource locator that allows a participant using a particular business protocol to access a collaboration space using the uniform resource locator associated with that combination; and

sending messages within the collaboration space using a messaging protocol that allows ~~the collaboration hub to determine the status of a conversation and its participants, wherein said messaging protocol provides an ability to specify the business protocol for a given conversation~~ each participant to specify a routing information and business protocol used by that participant for a given conversation, wherein the business protocol is specified by the uniform resource locator used by the participant to communicate with the collaboration space.

12. (Original) The method of claim 11 including specifying the routing criteria for a message by the message protocol.

13. (Original) The method of claim 12 including specifying the routing criteria in the message overhead.

14. (Original) The method of claim 13 including storing a repository of participant and conversation information which can be matched against a message overhead to determine routing for a message.

15. (Original) The method of claim 14 further comprising:

routing a message depending on the content of the message overhead and the content of the repository.

16. (Original) The method of claim 14 further comprising:

filtering a message depending on the contact of the message overhead and the content of the repository.

17. (Original) The method of claim 11 further comprising:

sending a message via a messaging bridge from a first collaboration space to a second collaboration space.

18. (Original) The method of claim 11 further comprising:

sending a message via a messaging gateway from a collaboration space to a business messaging system.

19. (Canceled).

20. (Original) The method of claim 11 further comprising:

sending a message via a messaging proxy from a collaboration space to a messaging device.

21. (Original) The message routing mechanism of claim 1 including a message router that routes a message and a message filter that filters a message.

22. (Original) The method of claim 11 including the steps of routing and filtering a message.

23. (New) A message routing mechanism for a collaboration system, comprising:

a central collaboration hub hosting a plurality of collaboration spaces and capable of receiving and sending messages between participants as part of a conversation between the participants;

a plurality of business protocol handlers, each of which are configured to use a different business protocol, and which may be used by a participant to participate in the conversation, and wherein each combination of collaboration space and business protocol is associated with a unique uniform resource locator; and

a messaging protocol that allows each participant to specify a business protocol used by that participant for a given conversation, wherein the business protocol is specified by the uniform resource locator used by the participant to communicate with the collaboration space.